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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, July 5, 1931.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: Vacations for Profit and Pleasure." Information approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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"Oh, dear, isn't vacation-time dreadful?"

That's what I heard a weary-looking woman standing near me at the market say this morning.

"I should say it is," answered her friend. "For us mothers there certainly is no joy in life from the day school lets out. I can't get a thing done with the children always underfoot."

"Oh, dear, you should see our house and yard now that my boys are home all day. A perfect sight from one end to the other. Every year it's just this way the whole ten weeks or so. I can tell you it is no joke to have three lively sons on your hands day in and day out. What with the canning to do and the hot weather and the youngsters to keep watch of, I'm about distracted already. And summer has only just begun."

"If you can imagine it, my husband says he doesn't understand why my nerves are all on edge every night. He suggested recently that we ought to take a little trip to give me a rest. I looked him straight in the eye and said,

"'Rest, Oscar?' 'Rest on a trip with the children along? Those youngsters are more trouble traveling than at home. No, I might as well stay in my own back yard and get along as best I can.'"

This conversation was still in progress when I got my bundles and departed. As I walked home thinking over what I had heard I began to wonder how my Next Door Neighbor was standing the vacation. Her children had been at home for about ten days but I hadn't heard any complaints.

As I came up her walk I could hear many small voices laughing and talking inside.

"Come on in and join the party, Aunt Sammy," called my Neighbor. "We're having a cooperative cleaning bee, taking turns running the vacuum cleaner, dusting the furniture and sweeping the porch. A gathering of playmates and relatives, you see."

"Lots of fun, Aunt Sammy," said Betty Jane.

"Look at me. I can sweep just like mother," said Arabella Ames who is no bigger than a minute. Her voice was very proud.

"See how clean this table is where I dusted." said another small but important voice.

"Afterward the children and I are going out on the porch to blow soap bubbles. I've fixed a new soap mixture guaranteed to make man-sized bubbles."

That little scene set me to wondering again. What about vacations anyway? Are they bugbears for mothers, or are they, as my Neighbor ways, great opportunities?

Well, it's not for a spinster aunt to say how children should be handled in summer or any other time, but occasionally she can't help having her ideas. I'll confess that I'm in favor of the way things are done next door. Moreover, I've noticed that mothers who regard vacation as a sort of endurance test, full of noise, interruptions and annoying neighborhood children running through the house, usually find what they expected--a difficult and trying season.

So do their children. To them vacation hours are likely to be a series of "don'ts".

"Don't slam that screen door again, Sally Ann."
"Jimmy, take that nasty toad out of the house this minute."
"Let that hose alone; you'll get your dress wet."
"Look out. Don't step in the pansy bed."

Oh, well, both mothers and aunts know how it goes.

My neighbor says the whole trouble is lack of intelligent planning for work and play. She declares that vacation can be a time of pleasure and profit for all the family, if it is wisely planned.

"My recipe for a successful summer is a mixture of work and fun for the whole family together," she told me. "All don'ts are banished and do's are substituted. It's my opinion that most mothers underestimate what their children can do and enjoy doing. Any child of school age is perfectly able to help with the ordinary tasks like sweeping, dusting, running the vacuum cleaner, washing dishes, making beds and even cooking. If any mother doubts it, I say, let her select one of these tasks and assign it to her seven-year-old son or daughter. The job may not be done to perfection at first, but her child will be learning to do constructive work and to share responsibility. It's a great thing to teach a youngster early to cooperate happily."

"I'd like to hear how you teach it."

"Well, for example, you know how children like to play in water. I capitalized on that and encouraged small daughter to learn to wash out her own socks each morning. She was so pleased with the little clothesline her brother put out in the yard just low enough for her to reach comfortably and pin the socks on. From that little job she has progressed to washing the dish towels

when the breakfast dishes are done. As for the boys, they really enjoy cleaning the porch with the hose, watering the lawn and garden and filling the bird bath each day.

"Lots of mothers I know would rather do these jobs themselves than bother to teach the children to do them. But I find that it pays in the long run to share the home work with them, for an hour or two in the morning, even if it is slower and requires patience to get them into line. Work and play with your children, while you have the chance, I say. What if the top of the piano doesn't get dusted all summer and what if the mending is left until fall. Some day the children will be off in homes of their own. Too late for the friendship and companionship we can have now. Then there will be plenty of time for me to keep house to perfection, if I want to. And no one about to bang doors and leave dead bugs on the living room table. I'm afraid, Aunt Sammy, that when that time arrives I'm going to miss even those dead bugs dreadfully.

The Menu Specialist says it's time for the whole family, and the children especially, to have a liver dish on the menu.

"What about a good liver and rice loaf?" I asked her. "There's an awfully nice one in the new green cookbook."

You see how it goes. That cookbook pleases me so much I just can't keep it out of the conversation.

Well, anyway, we're having the liver and rice loaf for the main dish.

Let's write out the plan for the dinner. Liver and Rice Loaf; Spring Onions; Swiss Chard; and a dessert to delight all the children--Cantaloupe a la Mode.

Now the recipe for liver and rice loaf. The list of ingredients is a bit lengthy so I'll read slowly and then repeat them.

1/2 cup of rice
4 cups of boiling water
1 pound of sliced liver
2 tablespoons of fat
1 small onion, chopped fine
1 cup of chopped celery
1/4 cup of chopped parsley
2 tablespoons of flour
1 cup of tomatoes, canned or fresh
2 teaspoons of salt

There. Ten of them. (Repeat.)

Cook the rice until tender in lightly boiling water. Do not drain it but let the rice absorb the water so as to form a sticky mass which will act as a binder to hold the loaf together. Wipe the liver with a damp cloth. Then sprinkle it with salt and flour and cook in fat in a skillet for about 3 minutes. Remove the liver and grind or chop it very fine. Cook the onion, celery and parsley in the drippings for a few mintues. Add the flour and tomatoes and stir briskly until thickened. Then mix all the ingredients until thoroughly blended and form into a loaf with the hands. Place on parchment paper on a rack in an open roasting pan. Bake for about 30 minutes in a moderate oven.